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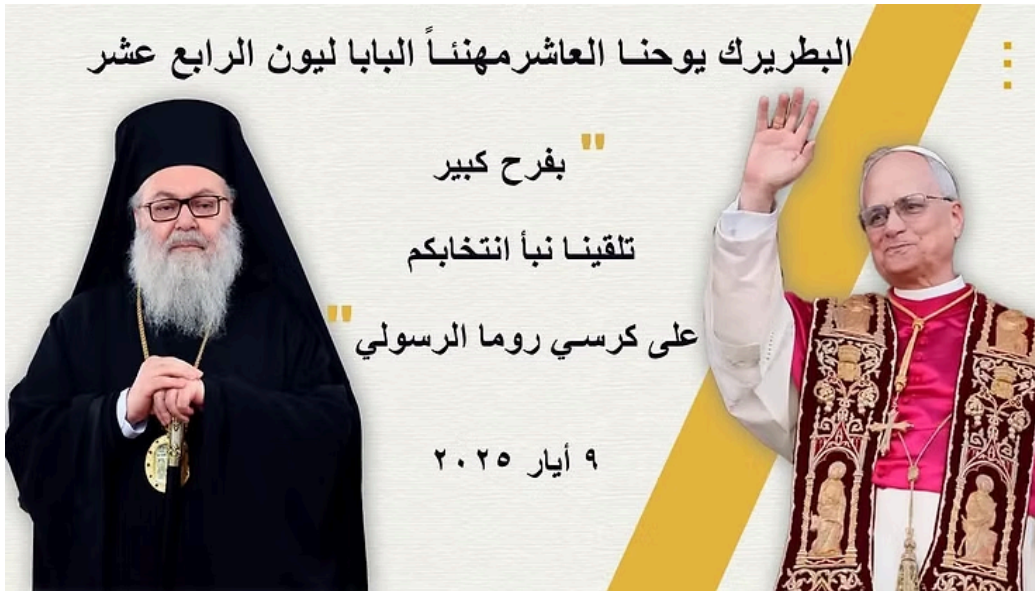
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Catechizing the Bishops: A Basic Course in Orthodoxy for the World Orthodox Hierarchs

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By Subdeacon Nektarios, M.A.

As the world now knows, Pope Francis passed away on April 21st, 2025. A conclave of cardinals was held and, almost immediately, a new pope was elected: Leo XIV. Predictably, the global media exploded in a frenzy of pageantry, symbolism, and hollow speculation. But perhaps more shameful—more revealing—was the swiftness and sycophancy with which the World Orthodox Patriarchates responded.



Instead of reacting as true successors of the Apostles, as guardians of the Orthodox faith once delivered to the saints, they behaved like foreign service officers, issuing a flurry of polished diplomatic niceties, groveling at the feet of the newly enthroned heretic in Rome. These statements were not only obsequious in tone, but saturated with theologically bankrupt sentiments, cloaked in the language of “fraternity” and “shared witness,” as if centuries of schism, dogmatic divergence, and papal innovation could be smoothed over with a carefully worded press release.

One after another, these Patriarchates—the same ones that claim to uphold the sacred canons, the same ones that commemorate the Ecumenical Councils in their liturgies—rushed to congratulate the Roman pontiff, hailing him as a “brother in Christ” and praying for “continued collaboration.” Collaboration with what, exactly? With an institution that exalts one man as the infallible vicar of Christ? With a hierarchy that embraces doctrinal novelty, moral ambiguity, and the grotesque liturgical experiments of the post-modern West?

Let us be clear: Rome remains in schisma and heresy. Its errors are not trivial—they are fundamental. Papal supremacy, the Filioque, created grace, purgatory, indulgences, the Immaculate Conception, and now the ever-expanding buffet of modernist deviations. These are not small footnotes to be overlooked in the name of dialogue—they are heresies that have led millions astray.

The holy martyrs of the Orthodox Church did not endure the sword, the stake, and the scaffold to see their successors nod politely while the Bishop of Rome dons his white cassock and receives the praises of a fallen world. Where is the voice of St. Mark of Ephesus, who refused to sign the false union of Florence? Where is the courage of St. Photios the Great, who denounced papal overreach with fearless precision? Where is the clarity of St. Gregory Palamas, who saw no need to flatter heretics for the sake of hollow unity?

In an age drunk on heretical ecumenism, where the line between witness and compromise grows ever thinner, the Orthodox faithful must speak plainly: we owe no allegiance to Rome’s pretensions. We seek no unity that sacrifices truth. We desire no friendship that costs us the integrity of the faith.

Let the patriarchs bow and flatter if they wish. Let them write their gilded letters and attend their interfaith photo-ops. But as for the faithful remnant of Holy Orthodoxy, we will not forget the words of our Lord: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” And we will not join in the applause for a pope elected by a conclave of cardinals, while the true faith is betrayed with every congratulatory word.

Now, in each of these letters, we see the pseudo-bishops acknowledging Leo XIV as the apostolic successor of the Roman Patriarchate. For example, in the letter from Patriarch Kirill of the Moscow Patriarchate, he begins by stating:

Your Holiness,

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on your election to the See of the Bishops of Rome! [1]

The Patriarch of Antioch, John X, in his congratulatory letter to Leo XIV says,

We received with great joy, emotion, and home the news of your election to the Apostolic See of Rome [2].

In his letter advocating for full Eucharistic communion, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, notably omits any reference to repentance or renunciation of papal heresies, asserting instead that:

We also look forward to the ongoing Orthodox-Roman Catholic international theological dialogue, which has been so constructive, and to which our Patriarchate, as a member of the Orthodox family, remains committed. We pray for this to be the pathway that we may walk together to unity and to full communion in the common Chalice [3].

Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia, in his letter, goes even further than the preceding patriarchs, declaring the election of the arch-heresiarch of Rome to be an act of divine providence. Porfirije writes in his message to Pope Leo XIV:

Undoubtedly, nothing takes place without the providence and holy will of God. Thus, the fact that the College of Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church discerned in Your Eminence the worthy successor to the late Pope Francis is a clear expression of divine economy. The blessed Pope Francis will remain in our memory—both personally and in the collective consciousness of the Serbian people—with the deepest respect and most cherished remembrance.

To assume the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church following such a strong and radiant spiritual figure is undoubtedly a demanding yet blessed mission. The Gospel itself strengthens us for the Lord says: 'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me... for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' (Matt 11:28, 30). [...]

As one who takes Christ, the Good Shepherd, as your model and strength, we are confident that throughout your pontificate, both in word and in deed, you will lead the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church toward the eternal and unchanging values of the Gospel. These values are, now more than ever, urgently needed in today's world—indeed, they may well be the only true response to the challenges of our time [...] We pray to Saint Leo the Great that, through the intercessions of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, you and the entire Christian clergy may be granted strength and support in your efforts to preserve Christian unity. Like Leo I, may you contribute, in purity of faith, to the proclamation of the truth of Christ, the promotion of harmony among Christians, the strengthening of cooperation between Churches, the cultivation of mutual understanding among peoples, the defense of spiritual and moral values, the protection of the oppressed, the service to one's neighbor, and stability and peace throughout the world.

To Your Holiness, together with the entire body of the Serbian Orthodox Church, we offer our heartfelt prayers for your health, strength, joy, and unwavering steadfastness in bearing witness to the Gospel, and we humbly pray for abundant divine grace to assist you in the fulfillment of your noble and demanding archpastoral duties [4].

As we can see, this letter from the Serbian Patriarch to the arch-heresiarch of Rome is by far the most egregious, filled with incredible statements of ecumenist heresy. From the very beginning, he proclaims that the election of this unrepentant successor to centuries of heresy was the holy will of God. But is it truly God's will that these heresiarchs persist in their unrepentant, thousand-year deviation from the Orthodox faith?

"We wholeheartedly congratulate you on your election as Pope of Rome and Head of the Holy See"

He goes on to refer to the late Pope Francis as "blessed"—a title traditionally reserved within the Orthodox Church for those recognized as saints, though not yet canonized by a truly Orthodox, canonical, and non-ecumenist ecclesiastical authority.

Porfirije continues even more boldly, declaring that Leo XIV, the new apostate bishop of Rome, contributes to the "purity of the faith" and the "proclamation of the truth of Christ." This statement by the false-teaching 'Patriarch' of Serbia is an astonishingly heretical proclamation, implying that the Popes—who for over a thousand years have rejected the apostolic faith of the Holy Orthodox Church—are somehow upholding or advancing it.

Moving further into the Slavic world, we come to the letter from the newly elected New Calendarist Patriarchate of Bulgaria, Daniil. Known for his persecution of the faithful Old Calendarists of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, this patriarchate also issued a congratulatory letter. In it, the Bulgarian patriarch recognizes Leo XIV as the legitimate Pope of Rome and sends him fraternal greetings as an equal hierarch, saying:

Your Holiness,

CHRIST IS RISEN!

We wholeheartedly congratulate you on your election as Pope of Rome and Head of the Holy See – the Vatican.

In the past days, we have witnessed the sincere, fervent love that millions of Roman Catholics hold for their spiritual father. We saw the love with which they offered fervent prayers for the health of, and later the farewell to, Your predecessor Pope Francis, as well as the immense joy with which they welcomed You after Your election. We believe that, according to their heartfelt desire, the Chief Shepherd and Guardian of our souls – the Lord Jesus Christ – has granted them a pastor who will respond with the same love in Christ; who, by proclaiming a message of peace, bears Christ's peace in his heart and will strive to be at peace with all people.

Your Holiness, our endeavor to remain faithful to the apostolic tradition, to the evangelical morality, and to the eternal virtues of Christ is the pledge of our gracious success as shepherds of Christ's rational flock, and a pledge for the fulfillment of the Lord's commandment for unity among His disciples – the Christians of the world.

May our Lord Jesus Christ, through the prayers of His Most Pure Mother, of Saint Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, and of all His saints, grant you spiritual and bodily health and strengthen you in your high and responsible ministry!

CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY THE LORD IS RISEN!

With love in the Risen Savior,

† DANIIL

PATRIARCH OF BULGARIA [5].

Here again we have another false teaching World Orthodox Patriarchate writing to the newly elected heresiarch of Rome that they both "remain faithful to the apostolic tradition" when again in again the Fathers of the Orthodox Church have rejected these *filioque'ist* who have fallen under the anathema of the eighth ecumenical council of 879 which condemns anyone who adds or subtracts to the Holy Nicene Creed. The so-called 'official' state churches were not the only ones that bowed before the Roman Papacy to grovel at his feet and recognize his "apostolic" election. In a statement by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the Arch-heresiarch, Elpidophoros, put for the following statement:

With fraternal esteem we recognize the historic election of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV as the 267th Bishop of Rome. The elevation, for the first time, of a Pontiff who hails from the United States is truly a milestone. His ministry, deeply inspired by the example of Pope Francis, resonates strongly with the enduring commitment of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew toward ecumenical dialogue, reconciliation, and care for the most vulnerable among us.

At this significant moment, we renew our unwavering commitment to strengthening dialogue and fellowship between our Churches, guided by humility, openness, and mutual respect [6].

Here again, we have the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, along with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, recognizing the election of Leo XIV as an apostolic and co-equal bishop. However, this comes as no surprise, given that the Ecumenical Patriarchate long ago apostatized from Orthodox Christianity. It has commemorated the Pope in the Diptychs since the non-canonical lifting of the anathemas in 1965—a betrayal publicly documented and even captured on video during Pope Benedict’s visit to the Phanar in 2016.

Furthermore, we have yet another statement from within the United States—this time from the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), another major branch of ecumenist “Orthodoxy.” In a letter addressed to the newly elected heresiarch of Rome, the false-teaching primate, Tikhon, declared:

I write to congratulate Your Holiness upon your election to the See of Rome, the Chair of St. Peter. As the primate of the Orthodox Church in America, it is my special joy to congratulate Your Holiness as the first American pope.

As I greet your election with joy, it is my prayer that Your Holiness might, after the example of your universally venerated predecessor, St. Leo I the Great, always proclaim the Christian faith with boldness and zeal.

Furthermore, just as the faith of St. Leo, articulated at the Fourth Ecumenical Council, remains a bridge between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, it is my hope that, under your pontificate, our Churches might find continued opportunities for cooperation and dialogue as we all seek to proclaim the light-bearing Gospel of the Savior. [7].

As we can see, nearly every major World Orthodox Patriarchate and jurisdiction has issued synodally approved congratulatory letters to the newly elected apostate pope, recognizing him as a legitimate episcopal see, a co-equal bishop, and one who possesses apostolic succession. According to the Serbian Orthodox Church, he has even “contributed to the purity of the faith” [8].

We must ask ourselves: would any of the Church Fathers ever consent to or approve of what is being said by these false-teaching bishops, who behave more like political diplomats or foreign service officers than spiritual shepherds? Is it truly their role as hierarchs to globetrot around the world, playing at diplomacy and groveling before every political and religious figure, rather than preserving the Orthodox Faith in its purity, as is their sacred duty?

Metropolitan Tikhon (OCA) at the Funeral of Pope Benedict

The obvious answer is a resounding no. There is nothing in Orthodox Christian tradition that would condone, let alone tolerate, these heretical statements or the recognition of an apostate hierarchy as legitimate—as all these false-teaching World Orthodox pseudo-bishops have done. The Orthodox Church’s teaching on the status of Rome has been clearly outlined, even in the most basic catechisms of the faith.

How, then, is this fundamental teaching of Orthodox Christianity so lost on all these World Orthodox bishops? The truth is, it’s not—they simply no longer care. Nevertheless, for the sake of those who genuinely do not know what to think—whether they are new to the Church or just beginning to pay attention—let us turn to one of the most accessible and widely respected catechisms, accepted by both Old and New Calendarists alike.

In the book *The Orthodox Faith, Worship, and Life* by Hieromonk Gregorios, published by Newrome Press, we read in Section A: The Faith of the Church, under the topic of schism and heresies:

Roman Catholics ceased to belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ when, after the great schism of 1054, they cut themselves off from the Church [...] Roman Catholicism did not preserve the apostolic teaching and as a consequence the apostolic succession of the priesthood was broken. It is for this reason that its Mysteries are invalid [i.e. graceless]. Its heretical doctrines are numerous [9].

Moreover, one of the primary heresies of the Latins is that of Papal Primacy. On this subject, Hieromonk Gregorios, in his catechism, *The Orthodox Faith, Worship, and Life*, instructs:

On the question of Papal Primacy, St. Symeon of Thessaloniki writes that since the Bishop of Rome ‘is not the successor to the holy apostles in matters of faith, he is not the successor to their throne either.’ Thus, ‘he is neither first nor father, but, on the contrary, he is... the adversary of the apostles. Summing up his views on Papists, St. Mark Evgenikos writes: ‘We turned away from them because they are heretics, and that is why we separated ourselves from them... So, how is it that those who have been considered heretics for so long and by so many Fathers and teachers suddenly present themselves as being Orthodox?’ [10].

Finally, in the Confession of Faith delivered by Saint Mark of Ephesus at the false Council of Florence—recently published for the first time in our latest work, *The History of the Council of Florence*—Saint Mark states the following, in part:

I will never receive into communion those who dare to add a novelty to the Symbol concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit, as long as they persist in such innovation. “For whoever is in communion with those excommunicated from communion,” it says, “let him also be excommunicated.” And the divine Chrysostom, interpreting the words (of the Apostle): “If anyone preaches to you a gospel other than what you have received, let him be accursed,”—says this: “He did not say if they preach something contrary or entirely corrupt, but even if they preach something small in addition to what you have received, or perhaps alter anything—let him be accursed [...] All the Teachers of the Church, all the Councils, and all the Divine Scriptures urge us to flee from those of different opinions and to withdraw from communion with them. Therefore, shall I, disregarding all of them, follow those who, under the guise of false reconciliation call to enter into union with those who have violated the sacred and divine Symbol and introduce the Son as a second Cause of the Holy Spirit? [11].

Once again, we can see that, according to the most fundamental and basic teachings of the Church Fathers, Saints, liturgical texts, and Canons, the Roman Papists are neither bishops, priests, nor any kind of legitimate clergy. They do not possess grace in their false sacraments, nor do they have apostolic succession according to the Orthodox Church.

If this truth is recognized by the Orthodox Church, even in our most basic catechism for new believers, then why do these false-teaching pseudo-bishops of World Orthodoxy continue to issue these types of letters to the Papacy at every opportunity?

The answer is clear: these are committed heretical ecumenists with little regard for the concerns of their struggling laity, who persist in tolerating the heretical actions of their pseudo-bishops that hope the laity will remain unaware and continue in communion with them. At least, that’s their hope. The real question is: will you, after all of this?

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